

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS

PROGRAMME

COURSE TITLE: How to Write and Read Mauritian Kreol for Professionals

OUs015

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1. Introduction

Mauritian Kreol has only recently arrived at a standardized orthography for its written form. The State recognized an official National Orthography for the Kreol Language in 2011. The Cabinet accepted the orthography proposed by the Akademi Kreol Morisien which it had set up in 2010.

This orthography is already in use in primary schools all over Mauritius for the second consecutive year. The Mauritius Institute of Education uses it in teacher-training courses and for preparation of school manuals. The University of Mauritius uses the official orthography. Increasingly, Ministries and Departments are converging on this orthography.

Many people use written Kreol in professional life, but have little knowledge of these developments of its written form. They often still labour on in writing Kreol any old way.

Let us take one example. Police officers write reams in Kreol every day. And they have done so for centuries. This means experienced police officers already possess a profound practical knowledge of the Kreol language, including its written form. Yet they still have to take hundreds of tiny little decisions on spelling, while taking down important content.

The same well-nigh-impossible task faces transcribers of audio Court Recordings and stenographers, magistrates and judges, on a daily basis. Doctors, too, need to take notes of patients' complaints verbatim, and at the same time take annoying little decisions about spelling, word breaks, abbreviations and all aspects of "orthography", when they need to be concentrating on things like a provisional diagnosis.

But today this difficulty is potentially over. This Course offers to show learners the way.

So it is a pioneering Course. It will also be fun.

It will introduce the broad public, and professionals who use written Kreol, to the official orthography for the first time in Mauritian history. It will also give learners a whole new very relaxed "mind-space" for creativity in their mother-tongue.

After Part I of the Course, a learner will have discovered how to decipher written Kreol and how to write down what they think in a proper orthography. Many people believe wrongly that it ought somehow to be "easy" to acquire writing in one's mother tongue. This is false. It will be fun, but not easy. While human language comes naturally to us as children without any formal instruction at all, *reading and writing must always be learnt formally*. It does not "come naturally" as speaking does. However, as with all skills, once a learner has acquired the techniques, there is a second stage. The knowledge must become automatic. After Part II a learner will have been put well on his or her way towards speed-reading and swift writing.

2. Course Description

The course is designed for professionals and others who need written Kreol to acquire the skill of writing in a standard, official, national orthography. They will acquire the 8 core skills mentioned below in Part I and then in Part II, they will have a choice of two out of five Units, each on a different theme, in order to develop the training for speed-writing, writing as an acquired reflex, and for reading with whole phrase recognition, i.e. beyond the deciphering stage.

The course will thus include:

In Part I

- What You See Is What You Get in Mauritian Kreol: the close relationship of sound of words to their written form.
- Word-breaks.
- Grammatical words, high frequency words.
- How to write and read vowel sounds.
- Syllables introduced, for the acquisition of consonants in Mauritian Kreol.

- Punctuation, its usefulness.
- Grammatical fun. Learners will become conscious of ten grammatical skills they already have.

In Part II

A choice of two out of five units for holistic practical work:

- Legal practical work
- Medical themes
- Literary texts
- Informative texts (newspaper articles, cyclone warnings, the code of the sea, official notices)
- Procedural texts

3. Course Objectives

To introduce the official orthography for Mauritian Kreol.

To speed up and increase fluency and accuracy in all written work in Mauritian Kreol.

To read with ease and speed.

4. Target Groups

Professionals, including:

- Police men/women, in particular those posted to police stations, CID, ADSU or Prosecution.
- People who work as Court Officers, Judiciary staff, the DPP, barristers and law students.
- Doctors working in general practice and in hospitals.
- Authors, poets, song-writers.
- The general public

5. Duration

20 hours of study time over the course of 3 months.

6. Entry Requirements

Literate in English and/or French and fluent in spoken Mauritian Kreol.

Accustomed to getting by in written Mauritian Kreol, but without recourse to the proper orthography.

7. Assessment Scheme

Evaluation will be done by:

Self-Assessment in the form of activities at the end of each Unit.

The preparation of an assignment, two-thirds of the way through the course.

A final one-hour written examination.

8. Certification

A Certificate of Completion upon successful completion of the course, i.e. submission of portfolio/assignment, and passing final examination.

9. Medium of Instruction

English and Mauritian Kreol

10. Learning/Teaching Strategies

The content is available in audio and written formats. The formal content is enriched by “fun” practical written work and little puzzles and games. There are optional extras for those who choose to make use of them.

There is an optional face-to-face session after the end of Part I for group trouble-shooting.

Part II gives a choice of two themes out of five in order to acquire holistic practical experience. Audio texts for dictation.

11. Units of Learning

Each learner will complete ten Units. There will be eight Units in Part I, and a choice of two out of five in Part II.

12. Course Structure

The Course will be structured around Part I of 8 Units, an optional face-to-face session, the submission of an assignment/portfolio, then in Part II, a choice of two units out of five, plus a final examination.

13. COURSE Outline

13.1 SYLLABUS OUTLINE

PART I: Deciphering Written Mauritian Kreol (English used in written part of course)

No	Unit Title	Viewing	Reading	Exercises	Total Study Time	Subjects Covered	Optional Extension
1	WYSIWYG or What you see is what you get.	5 min	10 min	20 min	2hr	Silent letters; accents.	YouTube: Prof Derek Bickerton talk on Human Language, in general, and Creole Languages in particular (25 min)
2	What is a “word”?	5 min	10 min	20 min	2hr	Word breaks, sources of words; apostrophes; articles.	Two pages photocopied from Arnaud Carpooran’s dictionary (15 min).
3	Grammatical words	5 min	10 min	10 min	2hr	Finite nature and high frequency of grammatical words in any language.	Notes on the importance of word order.
4	Vowel sounds	5 min	10 min	20 min	2hr	Vowels altered by consonants, vowels for imported words.	The words “tir” and “fer” in frequently used expressions with precise meanings.
5	Syllables	5 min	10 min	20 min	2hr	Consonants; double consonants	Link to official Min. of Education orthography by Dr. Arnaud Carporan et al.
6	Punctuation	5 min	10 min	25 min	2hr	Capital letters, full stops, commas, semi- colons, colons, exclamation marks, question marks, apostrophes, hyphens, dashes.	Notes of BICS and CALP. Link to Prof. Jim Cummins’ site
7	Grammatical fun	5 min	10 min	35 min	2hr	10 easy grammatical particularities of Kreol: voice, gender, serial verbs, suppressed plural marker, double negatives, three uses of “and”, two instances where a word’s place in a sentence determines its part of speech.	Link to official Min. of Education grammar by Dr. Daniella Police et al.
8	Codes & abbreviations	5 min	10 min	35 min	2hr	Letter-writing codes; terms of address, months of the year.	Letter writing. Two model letters.

PART II: Practical Sessions for development of speed reading and swift writing (Dual medium in written part of course: English and Kreol). CHOOSE ANY **TWO** OF THE NEXT FIVE PRACTICAL SESSIONS

No	Unit Title	Viewing	Listening	Reading	Total Study Time	Themes/Topics covered	Optional Extension
9	Court-related practice	5 min	3mins (a police statement)	10 min	2 hr	Taking two statements, one on a road accident, one on a drug charge; correcting statements in poor orthography; legal vocabulary.	Part of the Employment Rights Act in Kreol
10	Medicine-related texts	5 min	3 min (a patient's history)	10 min	2 hr	Vocabulary; a common illness described, scabies; patient's history.	Two more illnesses
11	Literary texts	5 min	A poem	10 min	2 hr	Poems, extracts from a novel and a play.	Bukie Banane – narrative writing in Kreol
12	Informative texts	5 min	What is a nuclear reactor?	10 min	2 hr	Vocabulary. What is a rainbow? What is a nuclear reactor? Code for the Sea. News article. Fragment on a docker's hook tool. Tips.	Long informative text
13	Procedural texts	5 min	Recipe	10 min	2 hr	Weights and measures, ingredients, instructions, conversions of measures of heat.	More procedural texts

13.2 OUTCOMES BY UNIT

Upon completion of Unit 1, the learner will be able to define the WYSIWYG principle for written Kreol.

Upon completion of Unit 2, the learner will be able to put breaks in words, and where not to. One of the uses of the apostrophe will have been acquired i.e. to signify the absence of letters.

Upon completion of Unit 3, the learner will be able to spell 100 “grammatical words” that occur commonly in Mauritian Kreol.

Upon completion of Unit 4, the learner will be able to transcribe the five main vowel sounds *a, e, I, o, ou* as well as vowels altered by a consonant e.g. *ay, ar, an, agn, aw*.

Upon completion of Unit 5, the learner will be able to transcribe consonants.

Upon completion of Unit 6, the learner will be able to apply capital letters, hyphenation as well as punctuation.

Upon completion of Unit 7, the learner will be aware of 10 grammatical structures that are specific to Mauritian Kreol.

Upon completion of Unit 8, the learner will be able to identify letter writing codes as well as abbreviations commonly encountered.

At the end of Unit 8, which is the end of PART I, the learner will be able to decipher Mauritian Kreol texts with ease, without yet being able to read fast, and will be able to write a text, though perhaps still with hesitation and conscious effort.

Outcome after Part II (two additional Units): The learner will be able to gain speed, fluency and accuracy in reading and writing in specific subject areas.

Upon completion of the Course, the learner will have become familiar with best practices in the official orthography, as well as be able to read and write in a relaxed, almost unconscious way.

Professionals like police men/women, transcribers in the Courts, lawyers, will be able to take down their notes and statements in standard orthography, no longer having to hesitate over spelling, punctuation, hyphenation, or grammar. They will be able to read their written Mauritian Kreol with higher speed and greater ease.

13.2 UNIT OUTLINES (Topics covered)

Unit 1	WYSIWYG or What you see is what you get. Silent letters; accents.
Unit 2	What is a “word”? Word breaks, sources of words; apostrophes; articles.
Unit 3	Grammatical words. Finite nature and high frequency of grammatical words in any language.
Unit 4	Vowel sounds. Vowels altered by consonants, vowels for imported words.
Unit 5	Consonants. Double consonants
Unit 6	Syllables. Capital letters, full stops, commas, semi-colons, colons, exclamation marks, question marks, apostrophes, hyphens, dashes.
Unit 7	Grammatical fun. One of two major differences between Kreol grammar and English grammar. The strange similarity amongst all Creole languages, world-wide.
Unit 8	Codes & abbreviations. Letter-writing codes; abbreviations e.g. terms of address (Mrs, Dr, etc), months of the year.
	CHOICE OF ANY TWO UNITS BELOW
Unit 9	Court-related practice. Taking two statements, one on a road accident, one on a drug charge; correcting statements in poor orthography; legal vocabulary.
Unit 10	Medicine- related texts. Vocabulary; a common illness described, scabies; patient’s history.
Unit 11	Literary texts. Poems, extracts from a novel and a play.
Unit 12	Informative texts. Vocabulary. What is a rainbow? What is a nuclear reactor? Code for the Sea. News article. Fragment on a docker’s hook tool. Tips.
Unit 13	Procedural texts. Weights and measures, ingredients, instructions, conversions of measures of heat.

14. REFERENCES

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